



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

DATE: February 18, 2026

POSITION: Unfavorable

BILL: SB 159

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) respectfully opposes Senate Bill 159. Ensuring the highest possible standards in emergency medical services is a goal municipalities share without reservation. Local governments take pride in the dedication and professionalism of their EMS personnel and remain committed to continuous improvement in service quality and patient outcomes.

However, as drafted, Senate Bill 159 would impose significant new administrative and fiscal mandates on counties and municipalities that operate or contract for EMS services. The bill requires quarterly performance reviews, formal certification and reporting to the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), and the establishment and maintenance of comprehensive complaint tracking systems. While accountability and transparency are important, these provisions substantially expand local administrative obligations at a time when many EMS providers are already experiencing staffing shortages and operational strain.

Quarterly review and reporting requirements may exceed what is necessary to achieve meaningful oversight. Many jurisdictions already participate in quality assurance programs and regularly review operational data. Requiring additional certification and reporting could divert limited staff capacity away from frontline service delivery and training. In smaller municipalities, compliance may necessitate new personnel, software systems, or outside administrative support.

The bill also focuses exclusively on “ambulance” performance data. In several jurisdictions, first response is often provided by fire apparatus or law enforcement vehicles that are not technically ambulances. As a result, the framework may not capture the full scope of EMS response performance, potentially creating an incomplete picture of overall system effectiveness.

Given the administrative complexity and potential fiscal impact, the League believes additional discussion is warranted before imposing new statewide mandates on local EMS providers.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 159 as drafted, while remaining committed to constructive dialogue on strengthening EMS quality and accountability.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

Angelica Bailey Thupari: Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, angelicab@mdmunicipal.org

MML represents 161 local governments and about 2 million Maryland residents.